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REPRESENTATION
OF

Some Mismanagements

BY

PARISH-OFFICERS

**In the Method at present followed
for Maintaining the Poor :**

WITH A

PROPOSAL

Humbly offered

For Rectifying the Same,

*by John Marriot Governor of
St Giles's Work-House.*

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year, 1726.

NOTIFICATION

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF THE

AMERICAN RED CROSS

OF THE UNITED STATES

AND TERRITORIES

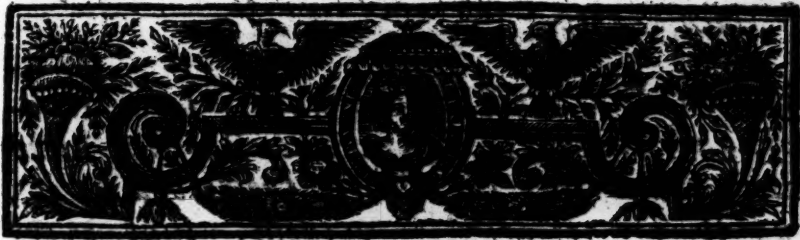
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

AND OF THE SEVERAL STATES

AND TERRITORIES

OF THE UNITED STATES

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THE PREFACE.

THAT the Poor of this Nation have evermore been a great Burthen to their own respective Parishes, in particular, as well as to the Kingdom in general, will not, I believe, be denied; And the great Pains which the Nation in several Reigns has taken to remove this Burthen, is a convincing Proof that it has all along been too heavy to bear: But it is surprizingly true, that no Attempt of this Kind did ever effectually answer their Hopes and Endeavours till the present Reign, when, the Success which followed two or three Attempts of that Nature, influenced

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enced the Legislature to pass the late Act for the Erection of Parochial Workhouses, or Houses of Maintenance.

UNDER the Sanction of this Law several, nay numerous, Towns and Parishes have lately fallen into the Course prescribed by it; and it is remarkably evident, that every Place which engaged in the Undertaking, has been a Gainer by it more or less, according to their different Circumstances, and the Care taken in their Management; for some Parishes have been much happier in that Respect than others, and the Benefit accruing to them has been proportionally greater. In some Places they have saved two Thirds of their Rates, in others one Half, and in some onely one Third. But I am very much inclined to think, that every Place might gain more than they do, and the Poor have much less Reason to complain, were it not for the Mismanagements discovered in the following Letter.

THE Corruptions of Parish-Officers has long been Matter of Complaint; and it is no new Thing to hear of an Overseer's growing rich at the Parish Cost. But it is high Time that some proper Course was taken to prevent and suppress an Evil that will otherwise be certainly banued down to following Ages, and vex the succeeding Generations. And the Discovery here given is, at least, a good Step towards

The PREFACE.

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towards it, as it shows the Arts of those who commit the Evil, and proposes an Expedient for the Cure of it.

IT cannot be denied to be a great Hardship for any Parish, after having taken the Pains, and been at the Expence of Erecting a House of Maintenance, to have the Gains which should accrue to the Publick by it, be conveyed into the Pockets of a few private Parishioners: And it is further unhappy for them, that these Parishioners are the Men who are entrusted with the Management of the whole, and under whose Stewardship, be it right or wrong, the rest are obliged to acquiesce. But it is hoped the Publication of this Letter will in some Measure conduce to suppress this Grievance, and bring Things to such a pass that it shall not be in the Power of a Tradesman, who usually pays the least Share of the Taxes, to get more by being put into Office, than a Landholder, who pays the greatest Share, and gets nothing but Trouble, whenever he is elected into the same Station.

THIS, therefore, is the Design of exposing the following Letter to the publick View; and not out of any private Pique or Prejudice to any single Person or Persons in Parish Offices, who may have rendered themselves obnoxious to Censure by the Practices therein discovered; but freely and generously to lay open some

Frauds, which, though too general, are such as no Lover of his Country can bear with Patience; and which, as being contrary to Reason and Equity, ought to be entirely suppressed. And, as both the Author and the Friend he writes to, are Well-wishers to their Country, and abhor all the mean Shifts made use of for unlawful Gain; so, they are very regardless what mean-spirited, covetous Men may think or say of them, while they do not doubt, but all honest Men, all that love the Publick will applaud their Zeal for the Publick, and join Hands with them to suppress Avaricious Frauds, and knavish Exorbitancies, wheresoever found, and by whomsoever committed.





S I R,



IN a late Conference between us concerning the new Method of providing for the Poor in Work-houses, or, as they are otherwise called, Houses of Maintenance, you desired to know of me, What might be the Reason that the Erecting of these Houses has not, in several Places, had so good an Effect towards lowering the Poor-Rates as was wished for and expected by the Founders? I have made it my Business to procure an Answer to this Question, and, in Compliance with Your Desire, I take this Opportunity to communicate the same to You.

THE great Burthen of the Poor Rates was, as it is well known, the grand Motive which induced the Parliament to pass the late Act for Maintaining and Employing the Poor, by encouraging and empowering Parishes to Erect Work-houses for them: In Pursuance of which several of these Houses have been erected, and, in some Places, with good Success; for the Rates have not only been lessened one half or more, but the Poor have been much better provided for, than formerly with the Collection they received from the Officers of the Parishes, which

which was too often squandered away upon their Vices, without doing them any real Benefit : Whereas now they are lodged, cloathed, dieted and wholly maintained, preserved from Beggary, Strolling, Thievery and all the ill Consequences of them, kept in a Course of Industry and Honesty, and live entirely free from all that Care and Anxiety which usually attends Poverty and mean Circumstances.

BUT, on the other Hand, it is indeed too true, that, although there be no Parish which have erected such a House, but have found their Benefit in it, yet in some Places the Rates have not sunk in such a Manner, and to such a Degree as was proposed and expected ; and the Landholders, instead of getting out of their Difficulty, have found themselves still very much oppressed and embarrassed by this unlooked for Charge ; and at the same Time, very much perplexed to think, what other Remedy to have Recourse to, since this Project, which bore so good a Face, and promised so well, did nevertheless disappoint their Expectations, and render their Hopes abortive.

Now upon the nicest Enquiry I have been able to make, I find there is not, nay cannot be any just Reason to condemn the Design of erecting these Houses ; for indeed were they rightly managed, they cannot fail of answering Expectation : But there is a hidden Mischief in their Management, which ought to be exposed, as being very destructive to them, and, unless timely prevented, must of Necessity obstruct their Well-doing.

THIS Mischief is caused by the Artifice and Knavery of some designing Men in the Parish, who being Tradesmen or Shopkeepers, make Interest to get into the Vestries or Offices of the Parish,

Parish, and particularly into such Offices as have the Disposal of the Parish-Money; then they get the Privilege to supply the House of Maintenance with Eatables and Drinkables or other Necessaries, which they charge at what Price they please, and are sure to be paid their full Charge for them; while the poor Master of the House, though he sees through the Cheat, dares not open his Mouth, or speak ill of his Rulers, for should he do so, he is sure to be silenced, and discarded at the first Opportunity, to make Way for another who will be peaceable and quiet, while the Parish suffers, through the extravagant Charge of the Poor-Rates.

THESE Tradesmen are, First the *Baker*, who sells his Bread to the House at a Rate much above the Market-Price; but, being an Overseer, a Church-warden or a Vestry-Man, is not to be contradicted by the Master of the House; and so he takes Care to get himself paid his full Charge, while his Office and Authority in the Parish secure him from Censure.

THE next is the *Butcher*, who usually plays the same Trick as the Baker, by furnishing the House with Meat much dearer than may be bought at the Market; or should he be so honest as to sell his Meat as cheap as his Neighbours, yet, being an Officer, or a Vestry-Man, he takes the Liberty to weigh and send in such Pieces as Ox Heads, Legs, Shins, Necks, and other bony Pieces and Stale Meat; while the Master, though he is hard put to it to divide his Meat in equal Proportions to his Family; and is hard thought of by the decayed Parishioners under his Charge, yet dare not refuse to take this Meat, nor must he presume to complain, for fear of affronting the Butcher, and so losing his Place.

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THE Third is the *Brewer*, who being circumstanced as above, will claim his own Price for the Poor's Drink: And, when he sends it in, let the Barrels be full or empty, let the Beer be good or bad, the Master must receive the same without complaining, otherwise Party will be made against him in Vestry, and he is sure to be turned out.

A Fourth is the *Cheesemonger* or *Grocer*, who, being also a Man of Authority, will act as he pleases in the Instances abovementioned; will charge what he thinks fit for his Wares, send in the worst Goods at the best Prices, and join in the same Measures with his Brethren for Interest.

THE same might be said of the *Doctor*, who is usually the Physician, Surgeon and Apothecary to the House, and, being in Office like the rest, will take Care to be well paid, whether he attend the Poor or no, or give them any or no Medicines.

I might say the like of some other Tradesmen, who all do the same Thing when they have it in their Power to serve the House; but the abovementioned are the Principal as they are all the Year round sending in such Necessaries as are continually wanting in a House of Maintenance; And to assure You that these Things are really so, I have found upon a just Enquiry that the Goods abovementioned are usually over-rated as follows.

Bread, 3 *d.* in a Half-Peck-Loaf above the Market-Price.

Meat, 6 *d.* in a Stone, or 8 Pound.

Beer, 2 *s.* 6 *d.* per Barrel.

Cheese, 8 *s.* per Hundred Weight, or a Penny a Pound.

Rice, double the Price. And so in Proportion for other Goods.

Now

Now that this Practice must be very chargeable, not to say ruinous to a Parish, will not, I believe, be denied; as it is the Means of keeping the Rates high, and the Inhabitants poor; and therefore, I think, it lies very much upon all Noblemen, Gentlemen, Farmers, Tradesmen and Inhabitants in the Parishes where these Frauds are practised and carried on, to see that they be stopped, and that the House of Maintenance be supplied in a cheaper and a better Manner.

I cannot forbear observing that in some Places where these Houses are not yet erected, the Overseers, being Men of the same Stamp with those just now described, persuade the Poor that they have no ready Money, and force them to receive Goods out of their Shops instead of it, such as Meat, Butter, Cheese, Sugar, Candles, &c. And it can be proved, that the Poor are often obliged to sell these Goods to other People at a Penny or Two-Pence Loss in a Shilling, for Want of Money to buy Bread and other Necessaries.

THUS, Sir, I have answered Your Enquiry, and, as You are a Person of a Publick Spirit, and have a generous Concern for the Welfare of Your Country, I do not doubt, but you will use your Endeavours to put a Stop to these mischievous Frauds, and indirect Proceedings. I must confess, I have for my own Part spent some Time in thinking upon a proper Redress for this Grievance, and am humbly of Opinion.

THAT no Church-warden, Overseer, Select Vestry-Man, or any other Person who has the Disposal of the Parish-Money, ought to serve the Parish in his own Way of Trade, or to supply a House of Maintenance with the above-mentioned

mentioned or any other Goods, during the Time he continues in such Office, or is vested with such Authority.

T H A T all Parishes, who set about erecting such a House, should so far consider their own Benefit, as to make it a Constitution among them not to suffer their Officers to supply the House as above.

T H A T in every Corporation or Parish, Choice be made of one substantial Person of Worth and Credit, who is to be the *Cashier* or Treasurer for the whole Body; That the Officers, commonly called Overseers, do only collect the Parish-Money, and pay the same to the said Cashier, who is to discharge the Parish Accounts in Vestry, either Weekly or Monthly, as shall be found most convenient.

T H A T, as this Matter is by no Means of a trifling Nature, and, as it will be very difficult in all Places to prevent the Officers acting as above, it is well worth the while of all Noblemen and Gentlemen of Interest to apply to the Parliament, and procure either an Act, or a Clause to be inserted in some Act, to put a full Stop to these Frauds, by restraining Officers and Select-Vestry-Men from supplying Parishes or Houses of Maintenance, during the Time they are so.

T H U S, Sir, I have with a great Deal of Freedom, given You my Thoughts upon this Matter, and submit the whole to Your superior Penetration and Judgment. Being,

S I R,

Yours, &c.



POSTSCRIPT.



THOUGH what has been laid down in the foregoing Letter be all I can say at present to the Question you proposed, yet I cannot forbear mentioning another Particular, which, though not immediately relating to the Matter in Hand, may nevertheless be thought worthy the serious Consideration of yourself and all other Gentlemen, who, from a true Love to their Country, have a Desire to see the aforementioned and all other Publick Undertakings succeed and improve to Perfection.

THE Case is this. I have been obliged either to go or send to most of the Places, not at too great a Distance from me, where Work-houses are erected, in Order to gain the Satisfaction you desired: Now, I soon found that these Parochial Foundations for the Poor, were at first set on Foot, and have since that, in a great Measure, been promoted under the Direction, or by the Advice of Mr. *Matthew Marryott*. Hence I had the Curiosity to enquire for and find out the Man of whom I had received so good a Recommendation; and, in Discourfing with him, I was perfectly fatisfied that the Account I had received of him was, in every respect, strictly true,

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HE was born at Olney, a Market-Town in *Buckinghamshire*, and it is now about Twenty Years ago, since that Parish was so much oppressed and over-burthened with the Poor Rates, that the most substantial Inhabitants were in Danger of being ruined by the growing Charge. In these perplexing Circumstances, they knew not what to do, they proposed several Expedients for their Preservation, but none would take, till this Man, a Parishioner of the Place, started the Design of *erecting a House of Maintenance*, and though some of the Inhabitants approved the Hint, yet others rejected it as an impracticable Novelty; so that full Seven Years were spent from the first Motion of it, before he could bring the whole Parish to begin the Undertaking; which at length under his Management, they did, and with so much Success, that, in Two or Three Years Time, he reduced the Rates to the one Third Part of what they amounted to before.

THIS good Success prompted the Neighbouring Towns to fall into the same Method, and he was sent for far and near to undertake the Charge of these new Foundations, which he did, with very good Success in all Places, as he proved to me by a considerable Number of Certificates under the Hands of the Principal Inhabitants of the Parishes where he has had to do. So that, it was, in some Measure owing to him that the Legislature passed the Act, of the Ninth of King George, for employing and maintaining the Poor.

I HAVE learned, that he has himself governed near Thirty of these Houses, but has given Directions for setting up above an Hundred and Fifty; In which Case, one would be inclined

clined to think he should have acquired a sufficient Competency to maintain himself now in the Decline of his Life. But he has declared to me that he has rode some Thousand Miles at his own Expence, without receiving a Penny for it: That Applications are still continually making to him, from even the most distant Parts of the Kingdom, desiring his Advice and Assistance, which keep his Mind continually employed, and is a perpetual Charge to his Purse.

Now, since there is great Reason to believe that this Undertaking will become general, and that every Parish in the Kingdom will sooner or later engage in it; there are good Grounds to suppose that this Benefit will certainly follow, That, whereas, some Years since, the Rates for the Poor throughout the Kingdom were computed at 1,100,000 *l. per Annum*, notwithstanding that great Numbers of Poor begged for their Subsistence, the whole Poor of the Nation may be maintained at the Yearly Rate of 500,000 *l.* in the Method of Management which he has prescribed; under which Regulation the two Parishes of *St. Giles in the Fields*, and *St. Martin in the Fields*, (both adjoining to *London*) will save Yearly about 5000 *l.* between them; and in the several Country Towns and Parishes where he has had to do (some of which save 300 *l.* others 400 *l.* and some 500 *l. per Annum.*) there is at least 8000 *l.* more saved every Year.

THE Sum therefore of what I would say is this. That as our Nation is beholden to this Man in a very high Degree for the great Good he has done, and still continues to do in his Generation, it is my humble Opinion, he ought to have a national Encouragement: Projectors of
useful

useful Undertakings, and particularly for the Publick Good, have seldom failed of meeting with such Encouragement, and *England*, above all the Kingdoms of the Known World, stands remarkably distinguished for the Favour she has shewn to such useful Persons, among whom there is none, I believe, living, has a better Claim than the Man we are speaking of. He is now in Years, and almost worn out in bringing about the Good of his Country, and therefore, Sir, if it should be in your Power to do him any Service of this Kind, you will not only do a generous Action in itself, but lay a particular Obligation upon

Yours, &c.

